

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Smead Manufacturing Company

Utah Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Lean Manufacturing Drives Five-Year Start-Up Plan At Smead Manufacturing

Client Profile:

Smead Manufacturing is a leading provider of efficient document management and organizational solutions for businesses and home offices. The Smead plant, located in Cedar City, Utah, began operations in 1997 and services the western states, including Alaska and Hawaii. The plant employs 266 people and generates annual revenues of approximately \$100 million.

Situation:

Smead's Cedar City plant used lean manufacturing practices to help reach the goals of a challenging five-year start-up plan. The company established a lean business model and it proved successful. The next logical step was to establish lean as an enterprise-wide methodology. Smead needed to train its plant leaders in the basics of lean practices, and relied on the expertise of the Utah Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Utah MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

Solution:

After offering a sample Lean 101 seminar off-site in St. George, Utah, Utah MEP provided in-house Lean 101 training to all plant leaders, using the plant itself as a live training model. Smaller teams participated in other training modules provided by Utah MEP, including value stream mapping and a set-up reduction activity hosted by Smead for other local manufacturers. These activities helped Smead personnel identify better, faster, more efficient ways to manage their production lines. Most importantly, the lean methodology provided a common frame of reference throughout the Smead facility. Since the original training effort, Utah MEP's Lean 101 seminars have been established as a consistent base of knowledge. New plant leadership receives lean training. The company has seen significant results from its lean initiatives, and continuous improvement guarantees more positive outcomes in the future.

Results:

Improved all aspects of dock-to-dock value streams in 8 product focused cells.
Reduced manufacturing costs by more than 40 percent.
Improved inventory management practices.
Increased revenues by 117 percent per employee.

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Reduced set-up times by 50 percent.
Reduced ergonomic risks and safety performance.
Improved throughput and lead time to customers.
Increased revenues by 37 percent.
Improved process up-time by an average of 30 percent.
Improved converted materials by 75 percent.

Testimonial:

“Utah Manufacturing Extension Partnership acted as a ready resource to support development of in-house knowledge and provided a ‘reality check’ shoulder to lean on when needed. They were available but not invasive, which allowed our culture to grow into the process. Sometimes they also offered much needed cheering.”

Tyler Perkins, Manufacturing Engineer